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BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF
BRITISH JEWS, LONDON

DEFENCE OF THE ALIEN
IMMIGRANT

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I.

A DEFENCE OF THE ALIEN
IMMIGRANT.

II.

OBJECTIONS TO THE ALIENS
BILL.

ISSUED BY THE LONDON COMMITTEE
OF DEPUTIES OF THE
BRITISH JEWS.

1904.



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I.

A DEFENCE
OF THE
ALIEN IMMIGRANT.

IN view of the fact that the agitation which has led to the new Alien Bill has been directed primarily against the Russians and Poles (who are Jews), and of the fact that certain provisions in the Bill are calculated to inflict on these people incalculable and unnecessary harm, the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews beg to present, in concise form, a series of facts which shew the utility of these Russian and Polish refugees to the State, and disprove the most serious charges made against the immigrants generally.

Fact 1.—The average annual increase in the foreign population of this country is considerably under 8,000 souls.

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The statement in the House of Commons of the Home Secretary in introducing the Bill, that the number of new settlers in 1901 was 81,000, and in 1902, 82,000, is entirely misleading, as is shown by the following figures extracted from the Board of Trade statistics which the Home Secretary purported to quote :—

Board of Trade Statistics of Emigration and Immigra- tion for the years referred to.	Year.			Net increase in foreign population of this coun- try as result of Emi- gration & Immigration.
	1895	...	...
	1896	...	...	6
	1897	...	...	8,300
	1898	...	...	1,700
	1899	...	...	2,800
	1900	...	...	12,100
	1901	...	...	13,800
	1902	...	...	9,000
				8,800

Total in 8 years ... 56,508

being an average increase of 7,000 per annum.

This figure is supported by the 1901 census, which shewed an increase of 70,000 Aliens in the last ten years.

Page 21 Report
of Alien Com-
mission.

Fact 2.—The foreigners in the United Kingdom only constitute 69% of the total population.

Fact 3.—So far as is known the only European countries which have a smaller percentage of foreigners than this country are Sweden and Spain.

Report of Com-
mission page 21

England has	...	...	69 %
Hungary	...	...	1.03 %
Holland	...	...	1.04 %
Germany	...	...	1.38 %
Austria	...	...	1.98 %
France	...	...	2.66 %
Belgium	...	...	2.82 %
Norway	...	...	3.05 %
Denmark	...	...	3.26 %
Switzerland	...	...	9.58 %

The United States has 13.71 % of foreigners.

Fact 4.—The only congestion of foreigners takes place in very limited areas in the Borough of Stepney.

London Census Report, 1901. In 9 London boroughs Aliens constitute less than 1 % of the population.

In 8 more they constitute less than 2 %	..
In 5	3 % ..
In 2	4 % ..
In 2	5 % ..
In Westminster they constitute 6.4 %	..
In Holborn*	9.6 % ..
In Stepney	18.18 % ..

* A very small borough.

Throughout the whole of London they only average 2.98 %.

In the East End Boroughs they constitute, not 50 % as popularly imagined, but 8.9 %.

Dissemination from the congested area has been most marked during the last few years, owing to the erection of Jewish factories in Tottenham and other outlying districts.

Minutes of Evidence of the Alien Commission.

Fact 5.—The charge that the Alien ousts the native workman from his home met a striking rejoinder in the fact that although all London was scoured for anti-alien evidence, not a single one of the so called "Ousted" (stated to be some 20,000 in number) could be found to give evidence at the Commission. Yet members of the working classes came forward to testify on other points quite freely.

Minutes of the Chairman's evidence.

Fact 6.—Undeniable evidence was given by the Chairman of the Whitechapel Board of Guardians, himself a life-long resident in the East End, and a large employer of labour there, that the native moved out of the district because the old staple trades, at which he was formerly employed, had, from causes quite distinct from Alien Immigration, deserted the district, and that the native was far better off, physically and pecuniarily, as a result of his removal to the suburbs.

The trades which are now centred in the East End are those introduced by foreign labour. They employ not only foreigners living in the district, but a considerable number of natives who likewise are able to find housing-room in the district.

Fact 7.—There are districts in London far more overcrowded than the East End. Such districts have no appreciable Alien population. The Alien is only a contributory cause of overcrowding, every resident in an overcrowded district, be he native or foreigner, being of necessity a contributory cause to the local problem.

Dr. Hamer's
evidence page
362.

The following was the result of an investigation made by the assistant medical officer of health of the L.C.C.

	Houses Visited.	No. of instances of overcrowding per 100 houses.
Mile End Old Town	507	2
Whitechapel ...	497	9
Lambeth ...	796	26
St. Pancras ...	567	31
Kensington ...	444	14

The principal causes of the present overcrowding problem were shewn in evidence by the L.C.C. witnesses to be

- (a) The gross neglect of the Vestries in the past to apply their powers for preventing and abating the evil.
- (b) The huge demolitions, particularly in the East End, of residential houses for railway extensions, factories, workshops, breweries, etc.
- (c) The necessity of persons to live near their work.
- (d) Insufficient means of locomotion to enable the surplus to live out of the district.
- (e) Immigrations from other parts into a full area, often consequent on re-housing schemes in neighbouring districts.

Far worse overcrowding than in modern times existed in London, in numerous districts, as far back as 1848. Modern overcrowding generally means one or two children too many in a room. In former days it often meant twenty to thirty adults too many in the same space.

Minutes of
Evidence of
the Alien Com-
mission.

Fact 8.—The Russian and Polish Jews in the East End practically accept no workhouse relief. In Whitechapel, for example, the figures produced by the Chairman of the Whitechapel Board of Guardians proved that while one native in twelve received workhouse relief, only one Jew in 1,500 received similar relief, and that out of 30,000 Jews, only one, in ten years, had entered the Casual Ward. The only relief they accept is medical relief, which is as much a test of destitution as the use of a Free Library.

Report of Com-
missioners,
page 19.

Fact 9.—The Aliens have introduced a useful system of sub-division of labour: also a system of piece-work wages, which means that they are paid according to the actual amount of work they turn out.

It is ignorance of this method of labour which has caused credence to be given to statements of low wages accepted by these Aliens. By working at one sub-division of a trade only, such skill is attained that a large number of articles can be turned out per hour per workman, and thus, working normal hours at a small wage per article, the Alien can and does earn more than the native working at a fixed weekly wage.

Ib.

Fact 10.—The result of these methods in the boot-making, ready-made clothing and cabinet-making trades has been the production of a new and cheaper article to the benefit of the working classes.

Fact 11.—The statement of the Home Secretary that these Aliens have caused a displacement of native labour is not born out by the report of the Commission, which, on the contrary, states :—

“The development of the three main industries—tailoring, cabinet-making and shoe-making—in which the Aliens engage has undoubtedly been beneficial in various ways: it has increased the demand for the manufacture of not only goods made in this country (which were formerly imported from abroad), but of the materials used in them, *thus indirectly giving employment to native workers.*”

Fact 12.—Had the Alien been otherwise than beneficial to native workers and to the trade of the country, there must have been found :

- (a) A *decrease* in wages.
- (b) An *increase* in unemployed.
- (c) An *increase* in pauperism.
- (d) A *decrease* in trade.

It is a striking fact that on the contrary the more the Aliens have increased in number, the more

- (a) Wages have *increased*.
- (b) Unemployed have *decreased*.
- (c) Pauperism has *decreased*.
- (d) Trade has *increased*.

The proof of these four assertions is in the following statistics :—

Year.	Percentage increase in Wages.	Percentage of unemployed.	Mean rate of Pauperism per 10,000 of Population.	Percentage changes in value of our Foreign Trade.
1888 ...	100*	... 4.9	... 268	... 100*
1891 ...	108.8	... 3.5	... 246	... 108.5
1900 ...	119.3	... 2.9	... 235	... 126.6

* 1888 = 100.

1901 Report of
the White-
chapel Guar-
dians.

Fact 13.—The reduction in poverty has been far more marked in the foreigners' district than elsewhere in England.

DECREASE IN POOR LAW RELIEF BETWEEN 1870 AND 1900.

Decrease throughout England and Wales	23 %
Decrease throughout the Metropolis ...	19·5 %
Decrease in Whitechapel* ...	60·8 %

* Whitechapel contains Spitalfields, which is the very heart of the so-called Alien and overcrowding problem.

Appendix to
evidence of
Alien Commis-
sion page 27

Fact 14.—The value to this country of the trades introduced by or mainly engaging the work of these aliens is enormous.

		Exports of Apparel and Slops (cheap clothing.) Value.			Exports of Boots and Shoes. Dozen Pairs.
1888	...	£4,658,000	...		661,000
1900	...	£5,286,000	...		630,000
*1902	...	£6,297,000	...		789,000

* One of the years of general depression.

ib. page 40.

Fact 15.—In spite of Major Evans-Gordon's statement (debate on the first reading of the Bill) that the emigration of British from this country is carefully selected, practically the same proportion of British as of foreign immigrants was rejected by the United States in 1902, namely 7% of British and 8% of foreigners.

Board of Trade
Statistics for
1902.

Fact 16.—An enormous pecuniary advantage accrues to this country, especially to its Shipping Companies, as a result of the huge transmigration traffic of foreigners: *e.g.*, the 8,800 immigrants who were added to our foreign population in 1902 was the balance of a total traffic of over 200,000 Aliens. Presume that each of these on average spends £4 on his passage hence in a British ship and on his maintenance when here, the traffic means £1,000,000 brought each year into this country and spent.

Evidence of C.
H. L. Emanuel
and Hermann
Landau.

Fact 17.—This huge transmigration traffic only passes through England because there is, for the foreigner, a slight pecuniary advantage in going to his ultimate destination *via* this country. Disturb this traffic by making stringent regulations, particularly such as directly or indirectly entail the raising of fares (*e.g.*, to guard against the expense of returning unnecessarily rejected Aliens) and the whole traffic will be diverted to Continental Steamship Companies.

Fact 18.—It is admitted that the criminality among the foreigners generally in this country is greater than that among the native population, a fact greatly to be deplored. It has, however, been proved that the cause of this is not the real Immigrant, the Russian and Pole, but American and German swindlers and professional burglars, classes which do not enter the country by the same channel as the Immigrants, and entirely distinct from them.

The Commission gave figures in its report which showed as follows :—

Report of Com-
mission, page
17.

That had the Americans contained criminals in proportion to their numbers, they would have provided 10% of the total foreign criminals. They actually produced no less than 23½%. Had the Russians and Poles contributed criminals in proportion to their numbers they would have provided 33% of the total. Had they contributed them on the same scale as the Americans they would have provided 76%. They actually produced 17% only.

Bearing in mind that it has thus been shewn that the only real causes of complaint against the Alien are his congestion in a small portion of one district in one City of the United Kingdom, and that a worthless class of Alien, criminal and dissipated and absolutely distinct from the industrious working class immigrant does undoubtedly enter in excessive numbers, it remains to examine the Bill, which proposes to deal with these evils, and shew how it fails in its purpose.



II.

OBJECTIONS TO THE ALIENS BILL.

Objection A. **Clause 1** of the Bill empowers the Secretary of State to make regulations providing for the production by the Aliens of such proofs of character and antecedents as may be prescribed, and in default of such proofs the Alien may be refused admission.

Should the regulations so made entail the production of an official certificate of character or a passport, they will be certain to constitute a great hardship in the case of Russian, Polish, and Roumanian Jews. At their best, Police Certificates of character in Russia are a farce. In many cases they can be purchased for about 10 roubles. Except by these means no workman, however good his character, who has been involved in a trade strike, or who is suspected of progressive views, can obtain his certificate, while the keeper of a disorderly house and the fraudulent bankrupt get theirs as a matter of course. The Passport itself is granted on the production of the certificate of character and the total cost averages (with moderate bribes) about £3 10s.

The likelihood of the Jew getting a certificate of character and a passport in Russia is entirely problematical. The methods which they use, at present, to escape their persecutors, were described to the Commission and need not be repeated. Once make these documents essential, and their chance of escape merely depends on the mood of the series of functionaries through whom their application passes, and at best will simply depend on the extent of the rapacity of such officials. This process of extortion must have an adverse effect on the alien's small savings, which should form their capital on arriving here, and the English regulations will throw these hapless people still further into the hands of their oppressors.

With regard to the Roumanian Jews the same difficulty exists and in an exaggerated form, entirely preventing them from obtaining the proofs which have been referred to.

Objection B. **The same Clause** enables the Secretary of State to limit his requirements to special classes of passengers and to special ports and routes. It is a matter of physical impossibility to subject the whole passenger traffic to inspection owing to its bulk and other causes, and it is only too likely therefore, that the regulations will be confined to steerage passengers arriving by the ordinary immigrant routes.

If this be done the whole of the provisions for keeping out criminals and disorderly persons will be so much waste paper. These people do not enter with the ordinary immigrant, and even were this not so, they would obviously in future enter by a route or by a class to which the inspection did not apply.

The Clause further seeks to impose on the Aliens the necessity of registering every change of address during any prescribed period (not to exceed 2 years from arrival). During such period these foreigners will be in a position little better than that of persons found guilty of crime and released on ticket-of-leave. The monstrous penalty of 1 month's hard labour (Clause 6) may be imposed for any breach of this regulation.

Objection C.

Clause 2 provides (*inter alia*) for the rejection on arrival of criminals, prostitutes, and diseased and mentally afflicted persons. No objection can be taken to the exclusion of these classes. The Clause also provides for the rejection of persons having no visible or probable means of support, a provision open to serious objection and misinterpretation.

It also (sub-section 3) enables the Secretary of State at the request of any common informer, made within 2 years after the landing of any Alien, to banish such Alien if it be shewn that he had, previous to his arrival, been convicted of crime or had, subsequent to his arrival, become a bad character or accepted parochial relief. As regards the banishment of an Alien who has received pauper relief, this Committee views with intense repugnance and alarm the provision which enables the information to be given *as late as one year after the relief has ceased*. It will be open to any trade rival at a time when the Alien has long passed the necessity for charity to thus secure his removal.

Clause 3 enables banishment to be decreed as an additional punishment to a foreigner who becomes a criminal.

Objection D.

Having these enormous powers of selection, Clause 2 gives another power of so extraordinary a nature that, had not its effect been pointed out in anticipation by the Committee's witness at the Commission, its insertion might have been attributed to an error.

The provisions already referred to aim at ensuring that none but the desirable should enter, and that those who subsequently become undesirable should be banished. Clause 2 gives a further power to any inspecting officer to object to the entry of any Alien on the mere ground that he is a person "likely to become a public charge." This power is given to a mere petty officer, invested for the purpose by Statute with a faculty of prophesy. Even were the officer a person endowed with an absolutely accurate power of foresight, seeing that there is no means of differentiating between the transmigrant and the settler, and that,

consequently, the number of persons to be dealt with is over 200,000 per annum, it is obvious that he would have to prognosticate each man's future at a glance. To render the regulation still more absurd, the officer is probably ignorant even of the language of the persons with whom he has to deal. He is, moreover, as likely as anyone else to be affected by religious and other prejudices. It is the Secretary of State who finally decides whether or not the Alien whose entry is objected to is to be admitted or not, but so far as can be seen, the Bill does not even give the Alien a right to appear before his judge and state his own case. The Commissioners, in their suggestions, were at least in favour of giving the Alien a definite right of appeal.

jection E.

Clause 4 contains a clause equally hard, but affecting, be it noted, not the new arrival, but the old settler of perhaps 30 or 40 years' standing. The Commission recommended that if an area became overfull, and it was shewn that Aliens had contributed to its condition, power should be given to close it *against new Alien arrivals*.

Clause 4, however, allows in similar circumstances not only *new* Aliens to be kept out, but provides that old settlers, possibly persons who have acquired local business connections of considerable value may for no reason at all, and absolutely without any compensation, be ordered to leave the district.

There are other objections which could be raised to the Bill but the Committee believe that they have already shewn that its main provisions are sufficiently objectionable and unworkable.

19, Finsbury Circus, E.C.,

April, 1904.

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